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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND FOREIGN POLICY OF MODERN UZBEKISTAN

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Annotation: The article analyzes the role of international organizations in the foreign policy of modern Uzbekistan. The philosophical essence of the concepts of "foreign policy" and "commonwealth" is revealed. The role of foreign policy in the life of society has been studied. The normative-legal documents on the principles of foreign policy are analyzed. It also pays special attention to active participation of Uzbekistan in the work of international organizations.

Keywords: Foreign policy, state, international organizations, international relations, principles of foreign policy, common wealth.

Over the past few years, significant changes have taken place in the foreign policy of Uzbekistan. First, Tashkent's approach to interaction with its closest neighbors in the Central Asian region has changed. These relationships have become more constructive and intense. It is obvious that Tashkent is striving to untie the sharp knots that took place in interaction with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as well as to intensify the already existing constructive relations with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

And, it must be said, the neighbors also went towards Uzbekistan. Secondly, Uzbekistan's ties with major international players have significantly intensified: Russia, China, the United States, the European Union, as well as other Eurasian powers, such as Turkey and Pakistan. Of course, Uzbekistan has previously maintained a high level of contacts with key international players, but the intensity of interaction was still lower [1].

Thirdly, Tashkent has significantly stepped up work in international organizations, seeking, in cooperation with other states, to solve common problems related not only to political and economic aspects, but also affecting issues of a humanitarian nature, ecology, and sustainable development in general. Fourth, we have witnessed a shift in emphasis in foreign policy. Over the past four to five years, Uzbekistan has been paying much more attention to the development of trade and economic relations, expanding opportunities for exporting its own products, as well as attracting investment and foreign business to work in Uzbekistan. That is, we are talking about greater economic pragmatism and constructivism, which in some way echoes the multi-vector policy of neighboring Kazakhstan: the authorities of the latter are also making significant efforts to improve the country's business image and position the state as open to mutually beneficial economic cooperation [2].

The actions of Uzbekistan in the international arena have become the implementation in practice of the foreign policy part of the Action Strategy for the five priority areas of development of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021, announced several years ago by the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev. This concept paper specifically emphasized the need for a "balanced, mutually beneficial and constructive foreign policy" aimed at "strengthening the independence and sovereignty of the state, creating a belt of security, stability and good neighborliness around Uzbekistan, strengthening the international image of the country." The delimitation and

demarcation of the state border with neighbors was indicated as a separate task of foreign policy in this strategy. These changes in foreign policy did not go unnoticed by numerous outside observers. Moreover , the steps taken by Uzbekistan in the international arena over the past four or five years contrasted quite strongly with the image of Uzbekistan that has become familiar to many foreigners as a relatively closed country, not strongly striving for active participation in international political life [3-6].

Of course, the current foreign policy of Uzbekistan, despite its novelty, also retains significant features of continuity with the foreign policy of an earlier period. This is especially noticeable in the field of goal setting. The geostrategic position of Uzbekistan has not undergone significant changes over the past half a decade . The tasks facing the government and society for the development of the economy and the social sphere have retained their continuity: creating jobs, improving the welfare of the population, developing infrastructure, improving the efficiency of the state apparatus, the quality of education, healthcare, and many others. To this day, such challenges as instability in neighboring Afghanistan, problems of drug trafficking and providing the country with water resources remain on the agenda of the Uzbek authorities . Thus, changes in foreign policy have affected its goals to a much lesser extent, and to a greater extent - the methods and means of achieving foreign policy goals. Methods and means of achieving foreign policy goals have become more flexible , diverse and, as it became obvious after a certain time, more effective in general [7-9].

One of the new components in the foreign policy of Uzbekistan in recent years has been a significant increase in activity through international organizations. Uzbekistan, like any other country, is a member of many international organizations. However, at the same time, Tashkent excludes joining military-political blocs and alliances. The most authoritative and important of the international organizations is, of course, the United Nations. In recent years, Uzbekistan has stepped up its participation in the work of the United Nations. At the last, 75th session of the United Nations Assembly, the President of Uzbekistan put forward a number of initiatives, including the development of an International Code of Voluntary Obligations of States during a Pandemic, special resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly on enhancing the role of parliaments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and ensuring human rights, as well as the announcement of the Aral Sea region as a zone of environmental innovations and technologies, the creation under the auspices of the United Nations of the Regional Center for the Development of Transport and Communication Interconnection. Also, the leader of Uzbekistan proposed to hold the International Forum "Central Asia at the Crossroads of World Civilizations" in Khiva. Tashkent is already actively promoting these ideas and can be expected to receive support from other countries to implement them. At the initiative of the President of the country Sh. Mirziyoyev , several resolutions have already been adopted within the framework of the United Nations regarding international cooperation in the field of tourism, sustainable development issues, issues of regional cooperation and interfaith harmony. In the short and medium term, Uzbekistan should be expected to continue this course and put forward new initiatives in the United Nations that would simultaneously concern the interests of Uzbekistan itself, and at the same time would be relevant for a wide range of other states [10].

The intensification of Uzbekistan's participation in the work of international organizations has not bypassed such an important, and in certain aspects, the key direction of Tashkent's foreign policy as interaction with the Russian Federation and post-Soviet countries, with which Uzbekistan is connected not only by considerations of an economic nature and maintaining regional stability, but also by extensive humanitarian contacts, common history and culture. The most important step of Tashkent in this direction was the acquisition of observer status in the Eurasian Economic Union, which took place in December 2020. This step indicates that the authorities of Uzbekistan consider the Russian direction of foreign policy and foreign economic contacts one of the highest priorities and are ready to move towards further intensification of mutually beneficial cooperation. In turn,

Tashkent is counting on reciprocal steps from Russia and its partners in the EAEU in creating more comfortable conditions and formats for cooperation [11].

Last year also became the year of Uzbekistan's chairmanship in another international organization of post-Soviet states - the Commonwealth of Independent States. Despite the fact that the influence of this organization cannot be called significantly large, and in many post-Soviet countries the attitude towards the activities of the Commonwealth of Independent States is skeptical, Tashkent also tried to use this platform to update tasks that are both important for the republic, but at the same time shared and other members of the association. During the chairmanship of Uzbekistan, the member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States updated the Commonwealth development strategy until 2030, and also approved the Concept of military cooperation until 2025 [12]. The priorities of the work of the Commonwealth of Independent States during this period were the restoration of the economies of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the social and legal protection of citizens of the member countries of the association located in other countries, countering epidemiological challenges, the development of industrial cooperation, electronic commerce and transport corridors, and also the stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan and the de- radicalization of extremists.

Another area of foreign policy in which Uzbekistan realizes its interests, including through the work of international organizations, is interaction with Turkey and other states of the Middle East. It is no secret that for more than 20 years, relations between Tashkent and Ankara have been at a very low level due to political differences. However, economic relations between the two countries continued to develop during this difficult period. Today, Turkey, in addition to having a capacious sales market, is also an important logistics hub on the route of cargo transshipment from East to West - through the Caspian Sea and further to South-Eastern Europe. In addition, Ankara has a serious influence on regional political processes and security issues [13].

In order to better realize its interests - mainly in the field of economy, logistics and tourism - in 2018 Uzbekistan became a member of the Cooperation Council of Turkic States (CCTS). This organization, founded in 2009 and in addition to Turkey and Uzbekistan, which includes Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, is a mild form of integration of Turkic -speaking countries in the political, economic and humanitarian spheres. Taking into account the fact that the CCTS also includes the Caspian littoral Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, and China is developing overland continental routes as part of the Belt and Road Initiative, cooperation with Turkey and the CCTS in the economic sphere can be potentially beneficial for Tashkent. However, at the same time, the political agenda promoted by Ankara does not always coincide with the interests of Uzbekistan and other states of Central Asia [14].

Movement in this direction is also the participation of Uzbekistan in the work of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), which includes Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the states of Central Asia. ECO focuses in its work mainly on issues of economic interaction. The site of this organization was actively used by Uzbekistan to agree on a project to create a railway from Uzbekistan to Pakistan through the territory of Afghanistan. The ECO today is not a "promoted" international organization, but, nevertheless, it has great potential for development, given the importance of the Middle East region in terms of logistics, as well as the economic and demographic potential of the states of the region [15].

In the process of analyzing the increased activity of Uzbekistan in the work of international organizations, the question arises as to what foreign policy goals Uzbekistan needs such an active participation in their work to achieve. Some of the analysts might see in this the desire of Tashkent to raise its own international prestige, someone might see some signs of political altruism. Nevertheless, the main reason for the more intense and purposeful activity of Tashkent in the work of international organizations is the defense of its own national interests. Some of the problems Uzbekistan faces are of a transboundary nature. For example, the problem of depletion of water resources in Central Asia. In this matter, Uzbekistan is highly dependent on its neighbors in the

region: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Accordingly, the problem can only be resolved inclusively. The same applies to issues related to environmental challenges in the region, such as the problem of the Aral Sea. Also, the issue of the Afghan settlement, which is of fundamental importance for Tashkent due to the geographical and ethno-cultural proximity of the two states, cannot be resolved by the forces of one country.

According to many characteristics of socio-economic development, Uzbekistan belongs to a cohort of developing countries and faces typical problems for this group of countries, ranging from youth employment, demographics, income levels of the population to education, infrastructure development and healthcare. Accordingly, promoting through international organizations a wide range of initiatives in the economic, social and humanitarian spheres - everything that can be called sustainable development - Uzbekistan is promoting its own economic and humanitarian agenda, while receiving the support of a wide range of states.

Along with the task of accessing seaports, for Uzbekistan, which has embarked on the path of an export-oriented economic development model, the task of entering large markets is extremely important. The states of Central Asia surrounding Uzbekistan, even with good demographic indicators, cannot boast of either a significant population or good solvent demand (with the possible exception of Kazakhstan). At the same time, capacious markets such as Russia, China, Turkey, South Asian states are located at a certain geographical distance. Russia is separated from Uzbekistan by Kazakhstan. The path to China lies through Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The path to the densely populated and growing economically and demographically South Asia is blocked by the mountainous and politically very unstable Afghanistan [16].

Of course, cooperation through international organizations does not at all cancel interaction with other states on a bilateral and multilateral basis. The mainstream of the foreign policy of Uzbekistan, like any other country, remains the format of interstate cooperation - bilateral and multilateral. However, cooperation through the work of international organizations also has its advantages: it allows you to coordinate positions, promote your interests more widely and direct the work of an international organization in the right direction, find allies and accumulate the resources of several states at once, increase international authority and improve positioning. Therefore, the active participation of Uzbekistan in the work of international organizations is a relevant and useful form of foreign policy activity, contributing to a more effective achievement of the set foreign policy goals and objectives.

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